

## REMARKS

Claims 5-6, 12-13 and 15-19 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 9 and 14 have been amended. New claims 20-23 have been added. Claims 1-4, 7-11, 14 and 20-23 are currently pending. Reexamination and allowance of the pending claims is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 5-7, 8, 12-15 and 17-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over USP 6,439,249 to Pan et al. ("Pan") in view of USP 5,954,417 to Mai ("Mai"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1, 8 and 15 are independent. Claims 15-19 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 1 and 8 have been amended to recite an interconnecting wire that connects a plurality of wire branches, with the interconnecting wire positioned adjacent the top end of the pole. In addition, claims 1 and 8 originally recites that the wire branch is releasably attached to one of the ribs. See page 3, lines 10-21 of the specification.

In contrast, neither Pan nor Mai teach or suggest:

- i. an interconnecting wire connecting a plurality of wire branches and positioned adjacent the top end of the pole; and
- ii. the wire branch is releasably attached to one of the ribs.

First, Pan discloses a wire 8 that extends through the pole 7 and the hollow supporting bar 4, and becomes wire branches 8 that travel through separate hollow awning tubes 3 (i.e., rib) to connect a plurality of illuminators 5. See column 3, lines 17-23. As best seen in FIG. 1, the wire 8 extends upwardly to the hollow supporting bars 4 at the location of the lower casing 6, which is well below the top of the pole 7. Thus, even if the wire 8 can be considered to be an "interconnecting wire", it is not positioned adjacent the top end of the pole 7.

Second, the wire branches 8 that extend through the hollow awning tubes 3 in Pan are permanently secured inside the hollow awning tubes 3. See column 2, line 53 to column 3, line 8, which describes a connector 31 and a slot 32 for holding each separate illuminator 5, where the connectors 31 and the slots 32 are not removable. The illuminators 5 are replaceable, but these wire branches 8 are not releasable.

Third, even if the electrical wires 831 in Mai can be considered to be interconnecting, they are not releasable (see column 3, lines 9-10 of Mai), and they are not positioned adjacent the top end of the umbrella rod 10.

Thus, claims 1 and 8 recite a wiring system for coupling LED lights to a patio umbrella that differs from the wiring systems disclosed in Pan and Mai. The wiring system

in claims 1 and 8 is advantageous because it can be easily attached and removed from a patio umbrella, and is attached at positions (e.g., adjacent the top of the pole) which minimize complexity in its construction, and which reduce the hazards to the users. In contrast, the wiring system in Pan is fixed and cannot be replaced, and must be run through all of the pole 7 and the supports (ribs) 4, thereby complicating the construction of the patio umbrella, and increasing the hazards to the user. Finally, Mai is directed to an alert system for a conventional umbrella, and is not even related to an LED lighting system for a patio umbrella.

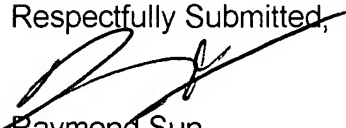
Thus, claims 1 and 8, and claims 2-4, 7, 9-11, 14 and 20-23 depending therefrom, and are submitted to be in condition for allowance.

In addition, new claims 20 and 22 recite that the interconnecting wire forms a ring about the pole, which is also not disclosed in either Pan or Mai. Also, new claims 21 and 23 recite that the interconnecting wire and the wire branches are formed as a single wire, which is also not disclosed in either Pan or Mai. For these reasons, claims 20-23 are submitted to define additional allowable subject matter.

\* \* \*

Thus, all pending claims are submitted to be in condition for allowance. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner has any amendments or ideas that might place this application in condition for allowance.

Respectfully Submitted,

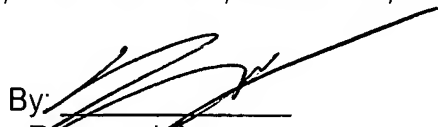
  
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By:

  
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